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Conference Abstract

Embedding Data Sharing in Biodiversity Research

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Abstract

Increasing the number of occurrence records available for biodiversity research requires developing efficient pipelines from collectors and observers to data aggregators and then marketing those pipelines to biodiversity researchers. To be effective, these pipelines must recognize that in many countries, internet access is slow, intermittent, or expensive; cell phone internet access may be more common but many people cannot afford the costs associated with using a cell phone for databasing. The pipelines must also make it easy for users to provide high quality data that conforms to international biodiversity data standards. Marketing of these pipelines should include building understanding of these standards and enable data providers to benefit almost immediately from their contributions. Symbiota has succeeded in making over 32 million specimen records available but most come from the United States, a country with fast and reliable internet access in most regions. We have established two Symbiota-based websites, OpenHerbarium and OpenZooMuseum, to enable collectors and collections in Old World countries that lack a national network, to become contributors to and participants in the global biodiversity data sharing community. Talking with biodiversity researchers in such countries has clarified the many impediments to data sharing faced by their collectors and collections. In this presentation, we shall describe the steps we have taken, and are proposing to take, to improve the pipeline for collectors and collections in countries with poor internet access.

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Conflicts of interest

Neither of us has any conflicts of interest.